

efforts, as they exemplify the impact the private sector can have on our communities.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress has begun the process of localizing, privatizing, and eliminating outmoded and counterproductive Federal programs. But that isn't enough. The American people—through their families, religious and civic organizations and through their workplace—must make a commitment to be personally responsible for solving the challenges that face us. Ken Enns and Enns Packing have done just that. Ken and Enns Packing serve as a model for each of us. I urge every American to study how Ken has contributed to his community. Most importantly, I urge every American to put into practice in their own lives the lesson that Ken can teach us.

ATTORNEY GENERAL AWARD TO
STEPHANIE BOUCHER

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer recognition to an individual who recently received an extraordinary honor for her contributions at the workplace. Stephanie Boucher, the wife of one of my legislative assistants, received an Appreciation Award from the Attorney General on September 26, 1997.

What is unusual about this event was the fact that Stephanie is not a Federal employee. She is a contract worker employed at the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys [EOUSA] in the Department of Justice. I have been informed that it is highly unusual for contract employees to receive any type of official recognition from the Government for their work. Yet, over the past 15 months, Stephanie has shown that she is not the typical contract employee.

Stephanie received this award for "motivating and stimulating EOUSA's Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act [FOIA] staff with her team spirit, productive work ethics, and willingness to go the extra mile to reach the Attorney General's goal of reducing the FOIA backlog." This backlog, which resulted from Congress' reform and expansion of the FOIA legislation, at one point reached nearly 1,000 requests pending. It was through the hard work, willingness to work extra hours, and dedication to detail shown by Stephanie and three other contract employees, under the direction of Acting Director Bonnie Gay, that the backlog was reduced to zero by the end of fiscal year 1997. I would further note that despite the extraordinary circumstances of receiving recognition for their accomplishments from the Attorney General, none of them received any acknowledgement or congratulations from the contract employer.

What sets Stephanie apart in my mind from her colleagues is the fact that she accomplished all this while attending law school full time in the evenings at the University of Baltimore. I know from personal experience how difficult and demanding law school is, and believe that this underscores this young woman's strong work ethic.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would note that the administration requested funding in the fiscal year 1998 budget for eight additional positions in the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys to

handle FOIA requests. Furthermore, it is my understanding that two of Stephanie's colleagues have been brought on full time with the Government since the issuance of this award. It is my opinion that Stephanie has already shown, through her past performance, that she would make a fine addition to the expanded EOUSA FOIA staff.

RECIPROCAL TRADE AGREEMENT
AUTHORITIES ACT

HON. THOMAS J. MANTON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. MANTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 2621, the Reciprocal Trade Agreement Authorities Act. The debate over fast track is not a debate over whether the United States should engage in world trade. Clearly, we should. This debate is about whether our Government will finally adopt trade rules that will put the interests of working families first instead of the rights of corporations to make huge profits at their expense.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that trade agreements must not be considered in isolation of the consequences which might befall workers and the environment. Unfortunately, the bill before us does not require that future trade agreements ensure progress toward ensuring workers' rights and enhancing environmental protections. Instead, the bill limits the labor and environmental issues which can be considered under fast track authority to those that are "directly related to trade and decrease market opportunities for U.S. exports or distort U.S. trade." This wording attempts to hide the continued disregard for American workers behind carefully constructed language that allows trade negotiators to pay lip-service to environmental, consumer, and labor issues without requiring them to do anything about them. Instead, labor and environmental issues will be ignored or relegated to NAFTA-like side agreements which have proven to be wholly inadequate and have made implementation of these provisions virtually unenforceable in the past.

In addition, this fast track legislation grants the President wider authority over trade than given to any previous administration since its inception. And, while lawmakers could vote either up or down on a specific proposal, they would be stripped of their powers to amend, revise, correct, or improve complex, and far-reaching trade agreements, effectively denying Congress its constitutional right to regulate foreign commerce.

Mr. Speaker, the administration has promised that if granted fast track authority, they will use it to expand NAFTA to Chile as the first step toward creation of a Free Trade Zone of the Americas. But, after 3 years of the NAFTA experience, the evidence shows that as both a trade agreement and a trade model, NAFTA has been a failure. We have seen a trade surplus with Mexico transformed into a \$16 billion deficit, part of a total United States trade deficit with Canada and Mexico of \$48.3 billion dollars. We have seen a net loss of U.S. jobs in all 50 States totaling more than 420,000, including 20,000 in my home State of New York alone.

And, recently Mr. Speaker, the negative effects of NAFTA have struck my own Seventh

Congressional District of New York particularly hard. Swingline, a manufacturer of staples and staple products located in Long Island City, recently announced plans to close down their plant and move their operations to Mexico. The Swingline plant has operated in New York for the last 75 years, including the last 40 in Long Island City. Swingline has long been a fixture in the Long Island City community, employing more than 400 workers, a majority of whom have only known that job their entire lives.

In addition, we have seen increased Mexican imports, coupled with restrictive inspection requirements and inadequate funding, combining to overwhelm border inspection systems. This has resulted in an increased volume of tainted foods coming into the United States, most recently demonstrated with the outbreak of 130 cases of Hepatitis-A in Michigan which were traced to strawberries illegally imported from Mexico. We have also seen an increase in unsafe Mexican carrier traffic traveling over United States highways, as NAFTA has provided for neither the financial support nor regulatory incentives to bring Mexican standards up to United States levels. And, Mr. Speaker, we have seen an increase in the flow of illegal drugs from Mexico as NAFTA's new flood of truckloads of imports has provided the means by which these illegal contraband may enter the United States undetected. Recent State Department estimates show that now 70 percent of cocaine, 80 percent of marijuana, and 30 percent of heroin enter the United States through Mexico, up significantly from pre-NAFTA levels.

Mr. Speaker, fast track supporters would have you believe that without this authority, the United States will be shut out from entering into lucrative trade deals in South America. But this is just not true. Indeed, in recent years trade between the United States and South America has moved from a deficit to a healthy surplus, even though we do not have any NAFTA-type free trade agreements with these countries. And, a lack of fast track authority has also not prevented the current administration from having negotiated more than 200 trade agreements with other countries since 1993.

Mr. Speaker, as I stated before, the debate before us is not whether America trades with the world, but what are the rules under which that trade takes place. Workers rights, environmental protections, and food safety must have a place on the negotiating agenda for any trade agreement. Unfortunately, this legislation before us does not adequately provide for their consideration. Therefore, I urge all of my colleagues to reject this fast track legislation and to give all future trade agreements and our overall trade policy the careful scrutiny they require and deserve.

RECIPROCAL TRADE AGREEMENT
AUTHORITIES ACT

HON. JAY KIM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. KIM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2621, the Reciprocal Trade Agreement Authorities Act, a bill to renew the President's authority to negotiate international trade

agreements through an expedited procedure known as fast track.

Fast track is a tool with which the President can negotiate international trade agreements. It is not a tool for the President to circumvent Congress and implement agreements. Congress retains its constitutional authority to approve any trade agreement brought under fast track, and maintains its responsibility to write and approve legislation to implement that agreement. I want to stress this important point: Congress still must approve or disapprove any new trade agreement reached as a result of fast track negotiations.

Fast track is a tool that the President will use to negotiate trade agreements to open foreign markets for U.S. exports. Exports are a crucial sector of the U.S. economy, particularly in southern California. Last year alone, California exported \$104 billion in goods. California exports support 1.5 million jobs, a number which is expected to grow at 100,000 per year. These are high-growth, well-paying jobs, with wages paying 13 to 16 percent more than nontrade related jobs. The President will use fast track to open up foreign markets for our exports, which will, in turn, create even more of these high-paying jobs. This is extremely important to the continued growth of the U.S. economy in general, and California's economy specifically.

The President will use this authority to open foreign markets for U.S. manufactured and agricultural products. These trade agreements will be designed to lower foreign tariff rates and barriers to entry in order to make our products more competitive in foreign marketplaces. If we are unable to negotiate these agreements, tariffs on our goods will remain high, and consumers in foreign markets will be unwilling to buy U.S. products that are made and grown in our districts.

I am extremely disappointed that labor and environmental organizations are erroneously characterizing fast track as a new trade agreement lacking sufficient labor and environmental protections. I cannot repeat enough times: fast track is simply a negotiating process under which the President negotiates trade agreements—with the constant advice and oversight of Congress—that Congress must approve in order to become law.

It is also important to recognize that fast track does not, I repeat does not, preclude the President from addressing environmental and labor concerns in any trade agreement, so long as those labor and environmental concerns are related to trade. The fact is, we encourage the President to address these issues, especially those which hurt the competitiveness of our exports abroad.

I also want to point out that this is not a partisan issue: every President in the last 20 years has had fast-track authority. Democrat-controlled Congresses have granted the authority to Republican Presidents and vice versa. Every president since Gerald Ford has had fast-track authority to negotiate trade agreements. Without this authority, no foreign countries will enter into trade negotiations with the United States.

Finally, I want to make clear that granting fast track does not give the President a blank check to expand NAFTA. Any new trade agreement—including NAFTA parity for countries in Central and South America—must still come before Congress for approval and implementation. If Congress feels that a trade deal

is not in the United States' best interest, Congress will vote it down.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill. If we do not grant our President fast-track negotiating authority, we will only serve to hurt ourselves. Export markets will dry up, and we will lose all those U.S. jobs associated with exports. Please vote for fair U.S. trade. Please vote for U.S. jobs. Please vote for fast track.

FORUM ON THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on September 22, I convened a forum on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. This legislation, which would renew authority for most Federal higher education programs, will be considered during the next session of the 105th Congress. I invited students, college presidents, financial aid administrators, and business leaders from the Research Triangle area of North Carolina to come together at the Museum of History in Raleigh to discuss the future of student and institutional aid, support services for disadvantaged students, international programs, university-based research, and training for the work force. The participants were divided into four panels: "The Higher Education Act: Student Perspectives," "Priorities for the Higher Education Act," "The Financial Aid Challenge," and "Higher Education, the Economy and the Global Marketplace." Together, they outlined a compelling agenda for education policy and demonstrated the contribution our State is prepared to make to this debate.

I was joined on the moderating panel by David Longanecker, Assistant Secretary for Post-Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education, Senator Howard Lee, chairman of both the authorizing and appropriating committees for higher education in the North Carolina Senate, and Senator Wib Gulley, a member of the Higher Education Committee in the North Carolina Senate. Today, I want to summarize who the participants were and what they had to say.

THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT: STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

Five students from Triangle schools gave us the benefit of their perspectives on student aid. Mohan Nathan, student body president at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, emphasized four significant areas of concern for students: First, the grant-loan imbalance; second, the importance of the State Student Incentive Grant Program in leveraging non-Federal funds; third, the rising cost of graduate school and subsequent student debt; and fourth, how loan indebtedness may affect the career choices students make. Linda Hawkins, a student at Meredith College, spoke to the special needs of nontraditional students and supported more evening and weekend programs that would allow flexibility in family and employment schedules. Kendrick Coble of Shaw University recounted the difficulty of piecing together a financial aid package and called for a modification in the methodology used to determine financial aid eligibility so

that those who are working to support themselves are not penalized. Heather Thompson, a student at Durham Technical Community College and single mother of two children, testified in very personal and moving terms to the importance of the Single Parent Program—a program offered at Durham Tech which pays for her children's day care—in attracting more single parents back to school. And Terry Steckowich, a transfer student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, discussed the difficulty in transferring credits from a quarter-based institution—in his case, Durham Technical Community College—to a semester based system.

PRIORITIES FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT

Leaders from five higher education institutions in the Triangle comprised the second panel. They offered their views on challenges at their institutions and how those challenges should frame the priorities in the renewal of the Higher Education Act. President Molly Broad of the University of North Carolina system called for modification of the College Work Study Program to cover travel and training expenses for students who are participating in cooperative education. She also described the need to develop telecommunications infrastructure and support through expanded partnerships among colleges, primary and secondary schools. President Broad also testified to the importance of policy initiatives that were included as a portion of the Taxpayer Relief Act. She specifically referenced the importance of two items that I and other Members have been working on for 10 years which were included in the education tax relief section of the bill—penalty-free withdrawals from individual retirement accounts and the deductibility of interest on student loans. President Bernard Franklin of St. Augustine's college emphasized the accessibility and cost of a college education, citing the grant-loan imbalance and advocating an increase in Pell Grant levels. Second, he called for greater support of the technological infrastructure for colleges serving a large number of minority students. Third, Dr. Franklin addressed the need for increased funding and flexibility so that money in the Institutional Aid portion of the bill can be used to build endowments at historically black institutions. Chancellor Julius Chambers of North Carolina Central University urged more funding to help develop graduate programs at historically black colleges and universities. He raised questions about the restrictive matching fund component of the law and stressed the difficulty graduate programs have in becoming eligible for Federal funds. He also discussed the need for better outreach to low-income families concerning the Federal funds available for education. Chancellor Chambers went on to argue that the present method for determining the amount of money married students and students with children may obtain for loans and other aid is not sufficient. He argued in favor of increased Federal student loan funding to help single parents cover the expenses necessary to obtain a degree. President Bruce Howell of Wake Technical Community College, with whom I worked a few years ago as we crafted the Advanced Technological Education Program at the National Science Foundation, testified to the value of the grants his and other community colleges across the country have received to upgrade curricula and teaching